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Sriman BISWANATH DAS Mahasayo :—"Sir, I beg to propose that the consideration of the Madras University Bill be adjourned to the next sitting of the Legislative Council. Sir, we have a thin House and we came prepared to consider only the Annamalai University Bill, and it was practically understood that the consideration of this Bill would be postponed either to Monday next or to the next sitting of the Council. We were not at all, at least I am not, prepared to give our consideration and thought to the various amendments of the Bill relating to the Madras University Act. In these circumstances I take it that the Council will agree to the adjournment of the consideration of this Bill." 4-15 p.m.

Mr. K. UPPI SAHIB :—"I second it."

The hon. Dr. P. SUBBARAYAN :—"I have no objection to the adjournment of this Bill to the next sitting. As my hon. Friend Mr. Biswanath Das has stated, hon. Members have been considering another piece of legislation and evidently they want some little time to consider the effect of the amendments put forward to this Bill. So, I agree to the adjournment."

The motion was put and carried.

VI

A BILL FOR THE SUPPRESSION OF BROTHELS AND IMMORAL TRAFFIC.

The hon. the PRESIDENT :—"The House will now resume consideration of Mr. Venkatarama Ayyar's Bill. Last time the motion of Mr. Satyamurti that the Bill be circulated for public opinion was under consideration. The House will now resume consideration of that motion."

* Mr. A. B. SHETTY :—"Mr. President, Sir, it was rather surprising that such doughty champions of reform as the two deputy leaders of the Congress party should have thought it fit to oppose a measure of this sort."

Mr. S. SATYAMURTI :—"On a point of personal explanation, Sir, I did not oppose the measure. I moved for circulation of the Bill. It is a misrepresentation to say that I opposed."

Mr. A. B. SHETTY :—"It is true Mr. Satyamurti moved that the Bill be circulated for eliciting public opinion but almost the whole of his speech was nothing but an entire condemnation of this Bill and it showed that he was not for any legislation of this sort. What were his arguments, Sir? He said that Madras was the purest of the cities he had seen in India as well as in the West. For such evil as exists here there is ample provision in the Madras City Police Act. This Bill gives too much power to the police and they are likely to abuse it. It is strange that a gentleman of Madura should think of applying this measure to the City of Madras. Let him (first) set his own place in order and leave Madras to be taken care of by its own people. Any way this Bill is too dangerous a piece of legislation to be rushed through in this way. This was the substance of Mr. Satyamurti's speech the other day.

"Now I ask, Sir, whether this Bill has been sprung upon this House as a surprise. It was, as it was said the other day, drafted two or three years ago. It was put on the agenda several times but for some reason or other it was held up. And who is the author of this legislation? Not my hon. Friend of Madura but the Vigilance Association of Madras itself. This association has among its members some of the leading men of this city.

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It has for its President the hon. Sir Usman Sahib, and its vice-presidents are no less distinguished men than the hon. Mr. Justice Venkatasubba Rao, Mr. T. R. Venkatarama Sastri and Diwan Bahadur Tanikachalam Chettiyar. The Chairman of the association is an equally exalted personage—the Rt. Rev. the Lord Bishop of Madras. The persons who have drafted this Bill and are now backing it up are, therefore, eminent and responsible citizens of this city. The Bill seems to have been well received by the public. The Mover of the Bill referred the other day to a public meeting held in support of this Bill last month at which Sir Alexander Macdougall presided. I know of another influential meeting held long before that in 1926 or so and it was presided over by the Rt. hon. Srinivasa Sastri. At that meeting Dr. Lakshmanaswami Mudaliyar, who knows well the conditions in the City of Madras, moved the following resolution :—

'Whereas traffic in women and girls is rapidly increasing in the Presidency and the City of Madras and whereas brothels are becoming a menace to public health, this meeting urges the Government to introduce legislation for the suppression of brothels and traffic in women or girls.'

The meeting gave its hearty support to this resolution.

"It is well known that cities in the West have for a long time now been trying to establish some form of control over this evil. First, they attempted to regulate this vice by registering prostitutes, segregating them in special areas and licensing brothels. As a result of experience they have given up State recognition and regulation of immoral traffic in many of the western countries. To-day it is no longer a question of regulating the brothel system, but it is total suppression that is attempted. Just as in the matter of the drink evil, we no longer aim merely at temperance but ask for total prohibition . . ."

Mr. S. SATYAMURTI :—"Are you for prohibition ?"

Mr. A B. SHETTY :—"So also this Bill seeks not to regulate but to suppress brothels and immoral traffic. The measures proposed in it are in entire accord with the steps taken in other countries. In our own country, Bombay, Calcutta and Rangoon have already passed similar legislation. Why should Madras wait ? Is Madras, after all, so pure a city as Mr. Satyamurti wants us to believe ? The members of the Indian Delegation of the British Social Hygiene Council who visited Madras in December 1926 found the incidence of venereal disease very high in the City of Madras and they were told by many medical men that in other areas of this province venereal disease was equally prevalent in all classes of the population. The spread of venereal disease is mainly due to prostitution."

The hon. the PRESIDENT :—"I am afraid the hon. Member is not in order. The question now for consideration is whether the Bill should be circulated for public opinion."

Mr. A. B. SHETTY :—"This Bill, as I said, has already been the subject of discussion and consideration at several public meetings in Madras and they have all given their cordial support to it. The Indian Delegation of the British Social Hygiene Council have also discussed this Bill with the Vigilance Association and given it their approval. Mr. Satyamurti's opposition to this Bill and his proposal to circulate it for eliciting public opinion has been the subject of adverse comment in three of the Madras daily papers—*Swarajya*, *Justice* and *Daily Express*. This Bill has not come a day too

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soon, and I see no reason why we should defer the consideration of it by a Select Committee. Any clauses in the Bill which require modification will receive due attention from the Select Committee which consists of as many as 24 members of this House, and these may be relied upon to safeguard the interests of the people concerned so that there may be no room for any fear of the sort entertained by the hon. Member for the University. I have, therefore, very great pleasure in supporting the motion of my hon. Friend, Mr. Venkatarama Ayyar."

* Mr. A. RANGANATHA MUDALIYAR :—" Mr. President, Sir, I cannot help feeling that there has been a certain amount of unnecessary misapprehension of the attitude of the different Members of this Council regarding this Bill. My Friend, the learned Member for the University, in the course of his speech has referred to several points which, from his point of view, require serious consideration. And I think I may at once confess my sympathy with some of the points raised by him. After all, when a Bill is referred to a Select Committee, you may take it for granted that the members of the Select Committee would certainly consider all aspects of the Bill and the very many points which might have been raised in regard to the provisions of that Bill both here and possibly outside the House. And I have not the slightest doubt in my mind that the Select Committee would bear in mind the different aspects which my hon. Friend, Mr. Satyamurti, has elaborated on the floor of this House, and he may rest assured that his object, namely, that the Bill should be considered from various aspects to which he has drawn attention, has been achieved. And I go further and say that there is nothing to prevent hereafter some Member of this House or one outside from bringing to the notice of the Select Committee more points for consideration. Therefore I would appeal to the Member for the University that, in view of the fact that the Select Committee are bound to consider the criticisms he has offered on the Bill, he would see his way to withdraw his motion for circulation of the Bill and allow the Bill to go to the Select Committee now."

* Mr. S. SATYAMURTI :—" In view of what my hon. Friend has said and with a view to show to all, except those who are prejudiced against me personally, that my object is to improve the Bill and not to kill it, I crave leave of yourself, Sir, and of the House to withdraw my motion for circulating the Bill for public opinion."

The motion for circulation was by leave of the House withdrawn.

Mr. ABDUL HAMID KHAN :—" Sir, I move that the following names be added to the list of Members of the Select Committee :—

Messrs. Sami Venkatachalam Chetti, S. Satyamurti and C. V. Venkataramana Ayyangar."

Mr. C. S. GOVINDARAJA MUDALIYAR :—" I second it."

The motion was put and carried.

The hon. Dr. P. SUBBARAYAN :—" Sir, I would just like to make one suggestion, if I may. This being a matter of brothels, I think my hon. Friend the Minister for Public Health should be on the Select committee."

Diwan Bahadur P. KESAVA PILLAI :—" Sir, may I know the number of the members of the Committee ? "

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The hon. the PRESIDENT :—" There were originally 24, to which 3 have been added just now. The Chief Minister wants to add another name. So it comes to 28.

" Has any hon. Member any objection to permit the Chief Minister to make the motion ? "

Mr. BASHEER AHMED SAYEED :—" I object "

The hon. the PRESIDENT :—" The objection does not prevail."

The hon Dr. P. SUBBARAYAN :—" I move that Mr. S. Muthiah Mudaliyar's name be added to the list of members of the Select Committee."

Diwan Bahadur P. KESAVA PILLAI :—" I second it."

The motion was put and carried.

* Mr. S. SATYAMURTI :—" May I ask leave to add two more names to the list, i.e., Diwan Bahadur P. Kesava Pillai and my hon. Friend Mr. Ranganatha Mudaliyar ? "

The hon. the PRESIDENT :—" I wish to know whether any hon. Member has got any objection to permit Mr. Satyamurti to add two more names to the list ? "

No hon. Member objected.

Mr. S. SATYAMURTI :—" I beg to move that the names of Diwan Bahadur
4-30 p.m. P. Kesava Pillai and Mr. A. Ranganatha Mudaliyar be added to the Select Committee."

The hon. Dr. P. SUBBARAYAN :—" I second it."

The motion was put and carried.

The amended motion was then taken up for the consideration of the House.

* The hon. Khan Bahadur Sir MUHAMMAD USMAN SAHIB Bahadur :—" I should just like to state briefly the attitude of the Government with regard to this Bill. I may say that I have considerable sympathy with the objects of the Bill. No doubt the evil exists and it should be remedied. There is no question about it. But the point is whether this Bill is free from practical difficulties. Some of the difficulties pointed out by the hon. Member for the University seem to me to be real. Under the circumstances the Government neither support nor oppose the Bill at this stage."

Dr. B. S. MALLAYYA :—" I am really surprised at the statement made by the hon. the Home Member. Whatever the difficulties, Sir, it is the duty of the Government to see that these dangerous women are segregated. The hon. Member must be familiar with the misery, illness and the destitution caused to several innocent lives in the City of Madras particularly Muhammadans and also the labouring classes surrounding the toddy shops and arrack shops in the City of Madras. Sir, he must have been particularly familiar with these because it was very near his old quarters in town—the Odaikara street, a locality for which he was a representative on the Corporation for a long time. That locality has earned a very bad name particularly as it is frequented by lascars, serangs and other deck boys coming from steamers who having a drink surround these abominable class of women. How these people are lured by touts if not actual agents to these howls of ill fame and actually robbed of their morals and money and have their lives

infected with the worst types of venereal diseases are well known when they come to the hospital for treatment. Sir, many of these women have got very bad notions that they can get rid of their diseases by having intercourse with young children. If the hon. Member is not satisfied with that I will give photographs of young boys thus ruined. It is high time that Government at least make it a rule that no prostitute is to live within 200 or 300 yards of an arrack or toddy shop, if they cannot do anything else. There are difficulties I do admit. Then the students and other unmarried people in the City of Madras not provided for by the Government to live in hostels and who are living away from their parents are exposed to these dangers and it is the duty of the Government to see that they are safeguarded. Then, Sir, there is the annual function the Park fair, which attracts hundreds of men from outside. On such occasions—my hon. Friend should have observed it in his experience—these infected women go about infecting unsuspecting young gentlemen and bachelors of the City. We have a large number of students in the City of Madras and in their interest at least we must have a rule. When this system is working all right in Calcutta, Bombay and Rangoon, I do not see any reason why we should not do it. Even if there is a certain amount of public inconvenience and police interference the people are prepared to suffer if it would mitigate the evils arising from immoral houses. I request the Government to see that something definite is done in this matter and that too, very soon."

The hon. Khan Bahadur Sir MUHAMMAD USMAN SAHIB Bahadur :—"I said the Government are unable to support or oppose this motion at this stage with the Bill as it stands. When it is referred to the Select Committee and the Bill is properly shaped, Sir, Government may accept it. To the Bill as it stands to-day the Government are unable to give its support."

Dr. B. S. MALLAYYA :—"I misunderstood the Member and I am sorry for it."

The motion was put and carried.

The Council then adjourned to meet again at 11 a.m. on the 26th November 1928.

R. V. KRISHNA AYYAR,
Secretary to the Legislative Council.